

What is claimed is:

1. A patient supporting apparatus, comprising:
  - a base;
  - a pair of elongate generally parallel extending and laterally spaced support frame members;
  - a pedestal mounted to and extending between a top side of said base and each of said support frame members;
  - a patient support deck having a head section and a seat section, said seat section including a deck plate oriented in a horizontal plane mounted to and extending between said support frame members;
  - a pair of laterally spaced support brackets on at least one of said base and said patient support deck adjacent to said seat section along a side thereof remote from said head section;
  - a fastener member having separate first and second coupling elements thereon supported on each support bracket for movement between first and second positions;
  - separate patient supporting devices each having an attachment member configured to operatively removably and separately connect only to a selected one of said first and second coupling elements.
2. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said first patient supporting device is a foot section supported on said fastener members for movement between positions corresponding to said first and second positions of said fastener members.

3. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said second patient supporting device is a foot end fowler section supported on said fastener members for movement between positions corresponding to said first and second positions of said fastener members.

4. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein at least one of said first and second coupling elements on each said fastener member is a receptacle having an opening facing generally away from said seat section, said attachment member and said receptacle therefor being configured to facilitate reception of said attachment member into said opening, at least one of said fastener members having thereon a first part of a two part latch mechanism and said attachment member having thereon a second part of said two part latch mechanism, said first part and said second parts being operatively releasably coupleable with one another to maintain said attachment in said receptacle.

5. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein at least one of said patient supporting devices has a handle pivotally supported thereon beneath a plane of a patient supporting surface thereon and mutually adjacent a side of said seat section remote from said head section, a linkage mechanism interconnecting said handle and said second part of said two part latch mechanism to facilitate an uncoupling of said first and second parts in response to pivotal operation of said handle.

6. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein said first part of said two part latch mechanism is an abutment mounted on one of said fastener members and pivotally movable therewith; and

wherein said second part of said two part latch mechanism is a movable member supported on said at least one of said patient supporting devices for movement into and out of engagement with said abutment.

7. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein said movable member includes an axle pivotally supporting said movable member on said at least one of said patient supporting devices, said movable member including a latching member configured to engage said abutment to effect a locking of said at least one of said patient supporting devices to said at least one fastener member.

8. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein said movable member additionally includes a spring for continually urging said latching member into engagement with said abutment.

9. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein first and second coupling elements each include an entry pathway into which a respective said attachment member is to be received, said entry pathway on said first coupling elements being along parallel first axes, said entry pathway on said second coupling elements being along parallel second axes.

10. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein said first and second coupling members are movable about a pivot axes.

11. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein said first axes lie in a first theoretical plane and said second axes lie in a second theoretical plane which intersects said first plane along a theoretical line that is congruent with said pivot axis.

12. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein an angle between said first and second planes is in a range of 35° to 60°.

13. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 12, wherein said angle is 50°.

14. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein at least one gas spring is provided between one of said fastener elements and one of said support brackets and being configured for restricting said movement.

15. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 14, wherein said gas spring includes a manually manipulative handle and linkage for facilitating a controlled movement of said fastener members to selected positions between said first and second positions in response to operative movement of said handle.

16. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein at least one of said support frame members and said patient support deck includes an elongate rail that is provided on each lateral side of said patient support deck, one end of each side rail terminating adjacent a vertically upright plane that is parallel to an edge of said seat section remote from said head section and a bed side rail releasably mounted to said elongate rail and extending along side a selected one of said patient supporting devices.

17. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 16, wherein a further bed side rail is mounted to at least one of said support frame members and said patient support deck, each further bed side rail being movable between a vertically upright deployed position extending above a plane containing said seat section of said patient support deck and a retracted position oriented below said plane.

18. A patient supporting apparatus, comprising:  
a base;  
a pair of elongate generally parallel extending and laterally spaced support frame members;  
a pedestal mounted to and extending between a top side of said base and each of said support frame members;  
a patient support deck having a head section and a seat section, said seat section including a deck plate oriented in a horizontal plane mounted to and extending between said support frame members;  
a pair of laterally spaced support brackets on at least one of said base and said patient support deck

adjacent to said seat section along a side thereof remote from said head section;

a guideway on each of said support brackets, said guideways extending generally horizontally;

a frame supported on said guideways for movement along a longitudinal path in a direction parallel to said elongate frame members between a first position stowed beneath said deck plate and a second position extending from beneath said deck plate on a side remote from said head section, said frame having a track thereon extending parallel to said longitudinal path; and

a receptacle mounted on said track for movement relative to said track in a direction parallel to said longitudinal path to positions at and between a third position stowed entirely beneath said deck plate and a fourth position wherein the entire receptacle is free of obstruction from above by said deck plate.

19. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said receptacle includes a handle.

20. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein each of said guideways include a plurality of rollers spaced horizontally from one another with at least one of said rollers having an axis of rotation contained in a first horizontal plane that is elevationally spaced from a second horizontal plane containing axes of rotation of at least two other rollers.

21. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 20, wherein said plurality of rollers is three rollers defining each guideway, each axis of rotation of each of said rollers which define one guideway being axially aligned with a corresponding roller in the other of said guideway.

22. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 20, wherein said frame is generally of a U-shape having a pair of parallel horizontally laterally spaced legs and a horizontally extending bight member interconnecting one end of each of the legs to one another, each horizontal leg having an elongate guide element which is positionally oriented between said first and second horizontal planes and resting on the rollers in the lowermost one of said planes.

23. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 22, wherein the rollers in each guideway are clustered adjacent said side of said seat section remote from said head section, and wherein said frame is supported on said rollers for movement between said first and said second positions relative to said side of said seat section remote from said head section, said first position corresponding to said bight member being horizontally spaced from the roller clusters, said second position corresponding to said bight member being juxtaposed said roller clusters.

24. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 23, wherein first and second steps are provided on said frame for limiting the movement of said frame relative to said side of said seat section to said first and said second positions.

25. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 22, wherein said receptacle has an open top and a radially outwardly extending flange encircling said open top with portions thereof being removably and slidably supported on an upwardly facing surface of each of said legs of said frame which define said track.

26. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 25, wherein a length of said portions of said flanges supported on said upwardly facing surface of each of said legs of said frame is generally less than a majority of the length of each of said upwardly facing surfaces in order to facilitate a sliding movement of said receptacle relative to said frame between said third and said fourth positions.

27. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 26, wherein third and fourth stops are provided for limiting the relative movement between said receptacle and said frame.

28. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said receptacle has an open top and a radially outwardly extending flange encircling said open top with portions thereof being removably and slidably supported on said guideway, a length of said portions of

said flanges being generally less than a majority of the length of each of said guideways in order to facilitate a movement of said receptacle relative to said frame between said third and said fourth positions.

29. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 28, wherein first and second stops are provided on said frame for limiting the movement of said frame relative to said side of said seat section to said first and said second positions, wherein said frame and said receptacle supported on said frame are configured so that when said receptacle is in said third position and when said frame is in said first position, said receptacle will be oriented entirely beneath said seat section and generally between said side of said seat section remote from said head section and said head section.

30. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 29, wherein said side of said seat section remote from said head section includes a notch and wherein said configuration additionally accomplishes, when said receptacle is in said third position and when said frame is in said first position, an orienting of said receptacle entirely beneath said seat section so that said notch is unobstructed by structure of said frame and said receptacle.

31. The patient supporting apparatus according to Claim 30, wherein said configuration additionally accomplishes, when said receptacle is in said third position and when said frame is in said first position, a cantilevering of said frame and said receptacle thereon

from said guideways so that a combined weight of said frame and said receptacle will cause a frictional resistance to movement between said guideways and said frame to be greater than a frictional resistance to movement between said frame and said receptacle.

32. A patient supporting apparatus, comprising;
  - a base;
  - a patient support deck having a head section and a seat section;
  - a pedestal mounted to and extending between a top side of said base and an underside of said patient support deck;
  - a first bed side rail mounted to said patient support deck and extending coextensively with said patient support deck and on opposite lateral sides thereof, each first bed side rail being movable between a vertically upright deployed position extending above a plane containing said seat section of said patient support deck and a retracted position oriented below said plane;
  - an elongate rail extending coextensively with said patient support deck and on opposite lateral sides thereof, one end of each side rail terminating adjacent a vertically upright plane that is parallel to an edge of said seat section remote from said head section;
  - a bracket mounted on each of said elongate rails and movable to selected positions along a length of each elongate rail;
  - a clamping mechanism on each bracket for fixing said bracket to a respective said elongate rail in said selected position;

a first mount on each said bracket;  
a second bed side rail and a second mount coupled to  
said first mount, said second bed side rail having a  
vertically upright construction extending above said  
plane containing said seat section of said patient  
support deck.